In the claims:

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 15 and 28-35 were pending in the application. In the office action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 15 and 28-35.

Please amend the claims as follows:

1-2. (Cancelled)

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Previously amended) A method of ~~quantitating IL-6~~ monitoring the status of a multiple myeloma-related plasmaproliferative disorder in an individual, said method comprising:

(a) providing a first bone marrow preparation from ~~an~~ said individual diagnosed with a multiple myeloma-related plasmaproliferative disorder and a second bone marrow preparation from a normal individual; and

(b) quantitating the amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured with said first bone marrow preparation and the amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured with said second bone marrow preparation~~s~~, wherein progression to multiple myeloma is indicated if said amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured with said first bone marrow preparation is greater than said amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured with said second bone marrow preparation, and wherein progression to multiple myeloma is not indicated if said amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured with said first bone marrow preparation is less than or similar to said amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured with said second bone marrow preparation.

5. (Previously amended) The method of claim 4, wherein said multiple myeloma-related plasmaproliferative disorder is smoldering multiple myeloma.

6-7. (Cancelled)

8. (Previously amended) The method of ~~any one of~~ claim~~s 1, 2, 4, or 5,~~ 4, wherein

said first bone marrow preparation is ~~selected from the group consisting of~~ a fresh supernatant from cultured bone marrow cells~~, a previously frozen supernatant from cultured bone marrow cells and a mononuclear cell preparation purified from bone marrow~~ from said individual diagnosed with a multiple myeloma-related plasmaproliferative disorder.

9-14. (Cancelled)

15. (Previously amended) A method of monitoring the status of multiple myeloma in an individual, said method comprising:

a) obtaining an earlier bone marrow preparation and a later bone marrow preparation from said individual, said individual undergoing treatment for multiple myeloma, at least one of said bone marrow preparations obtained after initiation of said treatment; and

b) determining the amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured with said earlier bone marrow preparation and determining the amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured with said later bone marrow preparation, wherein progression of said multiple myeloma status is indicated if said amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured with said later bone marrow preparation is greater than said amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured with said earlier bone marrow preparation, wherein improvement of said multiple myeloma status is indicated if said amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured with said later bone marrow preparation is less than said amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured with said earlier bone marrow preparation, and wherein stability of said multiple myeloma status is indicated if said amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured with said later bone marrow preparation is similar to said amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured with said earlier bone marrow preparation.

16-29. (Cancelled)

30. (Previously added) The method of claim 4, wherein said multiple myeloma-related plasmaproliferative disorder is indolent multiple myeloma.

31. (Previously added) The method of claim 4, wherein said multiple myeloma-related plasmaproliferative disorder is monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance.

32. (Previously added) A method of ~~quantitating IL-6~~ monitoring the status of a multiple myeloma-related plasmaproliferative disorder in an individual, said method comprising:

(a) providing a bone marrow preparation from ~~an~~ said individual diagnosed with a multiple myeloma-related plasmaproliferative disorder; and

(b) quantitating the amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured with said bone marrow preparation, wherein progression to multiple myeloma is indicated if said amount of IL-6 produced by said stromal cells is greater than the amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured in the presence ~~with a standard amount~~ of 1 pg/ml IL-1β, and wherein progression to multiple myeloma is not indicated if said amount of IL-6 produced by said stromal cells is less than or ~~similar to~~ the same as the amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured ~~with a standard amount~~ in the presence of 1pg/ml IL-1β.

33. (Previously added) The method of claim 32, wherein said multiple myeloma-related plasmaproliferative disorder is smoldering multiple myeloma.

34. (Previously added) The method of claim 32, wherein said multiple myeloma-related plasmaproliferative disorder is indolent multiple myeloma.

35. (Previously added) The method of claim 32, wherein said multiple myeloma-related plasmaproliferative disorder is monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance.

36. (New) The method of claim 4, wherein said first bone marrow preparation is a previously frozen supernatant from cultured bone marrow cells from said individual diagnosed with a multiple myeloma-related plasmaproliferative disorder.

37. (New) The method of claim 15, wherein said later bone marrow preparation is a fresh supernatant from cultured bone marrow cells from said individual.

38. (New) The method of claim 15, wherein said later bone marrow preparation is a previously frozen supernatant from cultured bone marrow cells from said individual.

39. (New) The method of claim 32, wherein said bone marrow preparation is a fresh supernatant from cultured bone marrow cells from said individual.

40. (New) The method of claim 32, wherein said bone marrow preparation is a previously frozen supernatant from cultured bone marrow cells from said individual.